

operation since 1982 at Shimla and the passports are issued from PRO, Chandigarh. At the PACC, Shimla in the last three years the number of applications received has been 1271 in 1997, 1261 in 1998 and 1226 in 1999 which does not meet the norms recommended by the Standing Committee for opening a full fledged Passport Office.

VHP Application to UN social council for consultative status as NGO

2098. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) has applied to the United Nations Social Council for consultative status as a Non-Governmental Organisation;

(b) whether it is also a fact that Pakistan had objected to this and if so, on what grounds; and

(c) what action Government have taken/propose to take to defend the VHP from the Pakistani propaganda and assist it in getting the NGO status?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir; it is understood that the Vishwa Hindu Parishad has applied for grant of consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) as a Non-Governmental Organisation. In accordance with the established procedure, the application of VHP for grant of consultative status is being considered by the Committee on Non-Governmental Organisations set up by the ECOSOC. Clarifications sought by members of the NGO Committee have been provided by the Organisation.

Officers deputed to International Organisations after Retirement

2099. DR. MAHESH CHANDRA SHARMA:

SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of officers of the rank of Joint Secretary and above who were officially deputed to world/international organisations before or after their retirement during the last three years with names and designations; and

(b) how many of them got themselves absorbed or re-employed directly or indirectly in UN, WTO, WHO, IMF and World Bank, during the past three years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): (a) and (b) Information sought in respect of the Ministry of External Affairs is nil.

Debate on CTBT

2100. SHRI V.P. DURAISAMY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether in view of the National Defence Missile System Testing by the USA, Government of India still considering to debate in Parliament about India signing the CTBT and also arriving at a consensus; and

(b) if so, the reason therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): (a) and (b) Government's position on the CTBT has been and shall continue to be based on considerations of national security and national interest alone. It takes into account but is not conditioned on developments in the area of ballistic missile defences and their possible implications.

Reunification of Korean Peninsula

2101. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a long shadow of war from the divided Korean Peninsula paved the way for eventual reunification during the recent South Korean President's visit to North Korea;

(b) whether an apprehension was also expressed that family reunions were becoming increasingly urgent with the passage of time as many of the family members are passing away and have to attend their lifelong wishes; and

(c) if so, whether Prime Minister would take up the matter with Pakistani counterpart to bring the conception of federation of the